

A BOY'S DOG

By Frank Pearson.

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The Waltons were not idealists, and when, after six years of married life, they took themselves and Bobby, aged five, to the long hoped for country home, they were prepared for certain tribulations. They did not feel exasperated when the coal turned to cobblestones in the furnace and the kitchen chimney made smoked meat a part of every dinner. But they did hope to raise chickens.

"One pair of Plymouth Rocks will produce two hundred young at the



"He's a Good Watch Dog."

end of a year," said Mary. "Now, allowing for ten per cent failing to hatch, that means 32,600 at the end of the second year, or, at fifty cents apiece, \$16,300. Deduct \$500 for food and fencing and—Bobby, don't you go near the pond!"

John did not see it that way, but he

did see a future in intelligent chicken raising. He preferred ducks, but with a roving little boy upon the premises the duck pond was not to be made attractive with feathered tenants. Bobby was abnormally inquisitive, and the pond kept his mother in constant "alarums and incursions," as Shakespeare puts it. So they planned to drain it, and meanwhile started on the chicken proposition, in the shape of a gigantic rooster and ten hens, thereby materially increasing the estimated profits.

The day after the purchase, however, there were one rooster and nine hens. The next day there were one rooster and eight hens, and a week later there were on forlorn and angry-looking rooster and two hens, which went about their domain with an apprehensive air.

"It's the pip," announced John, after studying them intently.

"But pip doesn't obliterate them, does it, John?" asked Mary. "Wouldn't there be something left to show?"

"Then it's thieves," said John exultantly. "Now I've got it. I'll get a gun."

Mary was afraid of guns and wanted to insure their lives instead. But John was scornful of this proposition. It was to a gun or a dog. A gun cost fifteen dollars, and a dog, a good dog—not a thoroughbred, but just a good, square, honest dog, might had for less. John couldn't make his mind. Providentially, as it seemed, it was made up for him. That evening an elderly dorky appeared at the front door.

"Yo' don' want to buy a good houn', do you, boss?" he inquired, pulling at a length of string, from the far end of which a yelping sound was heard. The yelping became more audible, and after a few yards had been drawn in a yellowish parallelogram came into view.

"Lay down, Charlie," his master commanded. "Ah'll let yo' have this houn' for five dollars, boss," said the